

VZCZCXRO7205
RR RUEHDBU
DE RUEHDBU #1650/01 3191346
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 151346Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1354
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 3263

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 DUSHANBE 001650

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/SCA, DS/ITA, S/CT, INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/2017

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: IED KILLS ONE AT CONFERENCE CENTER IN DUSHANBE

REF: A. REF A: RSO SPOT REPORT DATED 11/14/2007

[1](#)B. REF B: DUSHANBE 00001593

[1](#)C. REF C: DUSHANBE 00000928

CLASSIFIED BY: SETH E. GREEN, REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER,
DUSHANBE, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Per REF A, at approximately 0800 local time on November 14, an improvised explosive device detonated outside Kokhi Vahdat, a prominent conference hall in the center of Dushanbe along the main street (Rudaki Avenue). The Regional Security Officer observed more than 100 Ministry of Interior policemen on site and numerous officials from the State Committee for National Security. There was no significant structural damage visible from the main street. The explosion occurred outside the conference center building along the south side, where a small road leads to a residential area, separating the center from the Avesto Hotel. There are no entrances to Kokhi Vahdat on the south side. Press reports and official statements indicate that a single Tajik employee of the center was killed when he disturbed the explosive device. There are conflicting reports whether the victim was a gardener or security guard.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Canine specialists assigned to the Embassy for protection by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Militia Detachment for Special Purposes (OMON) were called to the site to assist with the investigation. The Regional Security Office's Security Investigator, dispatched to the site, observed a dismembered body surrounding the blast area, corroborating at least one fatality. The Security Investigator noted the Ministry of Interior was responsible for collecting evidence, which is likely being taken to the Ministry's forensic laboratory.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Members of Post's Local Guard Force were near the site around 0800 and heard the explosion. They noted that the Hotel Avesto, located approximately 60 meters away, was never sealed off nor were investigators searching the grounds in between the hotel and the side street. They speculated that this indicates a smaller explosive without shrapnel. Other private citizens including Tajik, American, and Canadian citizens contacted their friends at the Embassy with various details, all painting a similar picture -- an explosion just outside the conference center and a quick response by police to seal off the area. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's security office issued a spot report

with similar details and corroborating media reports that windows were destroyed at nearby buildings. Regional Security Office personnel on scene never saw structural damage aside from minor damage to Kokhi Vahdat itself.

14. (SBU) The Embassy is located in a different part of Dushanbe. There were no Americans present at the time of the blast. Embassy employees living approximately a kilometer away reported hearing a single explosion around that time. No additional explosions have been reported in the city.

15. (SBU) The regional consultative meeting for Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia was being held at Kokhi Vahdat, organized by the European Commission - Disaster Preparedness - ECHO in Central Asia. According to an official schedule, the Prime Minister of Tajikistan was supposed to open the conference at 0900 local time, followed by the Head of the European Commission Delegation with the rank of Ambassador. Embassy staff was invited to the conference, but none had planned to attend.

16. (SBU) The Regional Security Office diverted all Embassy vehicles away from the immediate area to allow Tajik law enforcement officials to conduct their investigation, and dispatched the Security Investigators to conduct liaison on site. Embassy employees were advised not to attend large gatherings. The Consul sent a warden message giving the same advice to private American citizens. Consular operations continued; however the Embassy stopped landscaping work on the compound in order to move personnel inside the Chancery. The local guard force set up an emergency dispatcher to track the movement of all official vehicles, provide advice on routes, and maintain accountability. The Regional Security Officer stood down the heightened posture at 1200 local time and provided an updated briefing to the Ambassador's detail on the importance of carefully screening locations in advance of her arrival,

DUSHANBE 00001650 002 OF 003

including Tajik government buildings.

17. (SBU) News media started gathering on site within minutes, after being alerted by correspondents from RIA Novosti and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, who heard the explosion. (The headquarters for RFE/RL is located close by the site). A reporter for the Central Asian cable network Mir TV tried to videotape the response from emergency crews and law enforcement, but a policeman confiscated the film. Some accounts noted (inaccurately) that the Kokhi Vahdat is also the headquarters of the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (President Rahmon's party), and pointed out that the Uzbek Embassy is located 100 meters from the incident. The local news wire Asia Plus cited an unnamed source that estimated the force to be equal to two to three kilograms of TNT. The wire also reported that the blast blew out the windows in the Kokhi Vahdat and "buildings nearby."

18. (C/NF) The President of Tajikistan was out of Dushanbe at the time, having left earlier that morning for the northern Sogd Region. He was traveling to the city of Khojand to celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of his initial election as Chairman of the Supreme Council of Tajikistan, the event which led directly to his becoming president at the end of the civil war. The Dushanbe City Prosecutor was on site approximately two hours after the incident and spoke with the press, calling the incident a "terrorist attack." He announced that the State Committee for National Security would lead the investigation. A Ministry of Defense contact later told the Regional Security Office's Security Investigator that the government set up a task force to deal with the incident, including the State Committee for National Security, Prosecutor General's Office, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense.

19. (C/NF) Major General Kosimjon GAFAROV, First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for National Security, spoke to reporters on the scene of the explosion approximately an hour and a half after the event and later told the Regional Security Office's Security Investigator that he was preparing a press

release for the international press as well. He stated that he was too busy, however, to brief the Regional Security Officer and did not assign anyone from his Committee to do so.

¶10. (C/NF) The Regional Security Officer received telephone calls from the British and German Embassies regarding the incident. The British Deputy Chief of Mission was concerned that the event signaled a targeting of westerners, as it happened at the site of a European Commission-sponsored event. She also speculated that perhaps it was an attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister.

¶11. (SBU) Comment: It is extremely unlikely that this was a planned assassination attempt, as the explosive was not near any entrance that would have been used by the Prime Minister, European Union Ambassador, or any guests. The size of the explosive blast makes it unlikely that it was intended to cause significant structural damage. What was unusual about this explosion compared to others over the past few years was that it occurred during the daytime and someone was killed.

¶12. (S/NF) Comment continued: Speculation concerning motives for this bombing was all over the map. Some Tajiks reasoned that the bomb was probably directed by the former opposition to embarrass the President; and others that perhaps it was staged by the government to provide cover for upcoming action against former opposition members. Prior attacks outside the Ministry on Emergency Situations were often assumed to be politically motivated, as that ministry was previously led by a former member of the United Tajik Opposition. Following the December 2006 government restructuring, there are few opposition personnel still employed at the now Committee on Emergency Situations, which was participating in the meeting at Kokhi Vahdat.

¶13. (S/NF) Comment continued: It is extremely rare for GAFAROV to give a press statement and unheard of for him to prepare a statement for the international press. Additionally, it is rare for statements to be made so quickly with the President out of town. GAFAROV himself usually travels with the President; and last week, he had told the Regional Security Officer that he would, in fact, be out of town with the President this week. GAFAROV's refusal to meet with the Regional Security Officer is understandable, but we will raise GAFAROV's refusal to assign someone else on his staff to provide a briefing at the next liaison opportunity.

DUSHANBE 00001650 003 OF 003

¶14. (SBU) Note: This is the second improvised explosive device detonation in Dushanbe in the past two weeks. On November 2, an improvised explosive device detonated in Dushanbe destroying the official vehicle of Lieutenant General Rajabali RAHMONALIYEV, the Commander of the Tajik National Guard. That case is still under investigation. (See REF B) In June 2007, a small improvised explosive device was thrown at the Supreme Court building in downtown Dushanbe. (See REF C) The Ministry of Interior is investigating this attack as a criminal matter. In June 2006, three explosive devices detonated around the city in early morning causing little damage. The Ministry of Interior investigated these incidents and concluded they were pranks by teenagers. End Note.

¶15. (U) The point of contact for this and all security related issues at Post is Regional Security Officer Seth Green. JACOBSON